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James Grieco Esq

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AFTER residing nearly a year in one of the most distant posts of the North-west Company, and conducting the fur trade there, I began to look forward to my return to Montreal. I waited with the greatest impatience for the arrival of the period which was to terminate my banishment, and restore me to society. I was nearly three thousand miles distant from any settlements, and my only companions were two young men, clerks of the establishment, whose characters, and limited acquirements, rendered them very uninteresting associates. My situation was one of considerable responsibility. A great number of Canadians, in the service of the Company, resided at the post, and were under my controul; but I found it a very difficult matter to keep them in a state of due subordination, and to prevent them from quarrelling and fighting with the detached parties of Indians that occasionally visited us for the purpose of trading. Interest and personal safety, alike, required that we should be on friendly terms with the natives; and I spent many anxious hours in endeavouring to promote mutual peace and good-humour.

Our post was situated upon the banks of a small lake, about sixteen miles broad. This lake discharged itself by means of a river into another of much greater dimensions, and thick forests covered every part of the neighbouring country.

One afternoon I took my gun, and strolled out in search of game. Though it was now the beginning of spring, the lake was still frozen completely across, the cold of the preceding winter having been very intense. I soon fell in with a flock of wild ducks, but before I could get a shot at them, they began to fly towards the middle of the lake; however, I followed them fearlessly over the ice, in the expectation that they would soon alight. The weather was mild, though rather blowy. Detached black clouds moved rapidly along the face of Heaven in immense masses, and the sun blazed forth in unobscured splendour at one moment, and was completely shrouded from the eye the next. I was so intent on the pursuit of my game, that I hastened forwards almost unconsciously, my progress being much facilitated by a

thin layer of snow which covered the ice, and rendered the footing tolerably secure. At last, I fired at the ducks, and killed one and wounded another. I immediately picked up the first, but its companion, having only been winged, began to leap away before I caught hold of it. I followed, but had not advanced more than twenty yards, when, to my astonishment, I found that the ice was in many places covered with water to the depth of several inches. I stopped short full of alarm, and irresolute what to do. It was evident that a thaw had already commenced, and as I well knew with what rapidity the ice broke up when once affected by a change of temperature, I became alive to all the dangers of my situation, and almost shuddered at the thought of moving from the spot on which I stood.

The weather had grown calm and hazy, and the sky was very black and lowering. Large flakes of snow soon began to fall languidly and perpendicularly through the air; and after a little time, these were accompanied by a thick shower of sleety rain, which gradually became so dense, that I could not discern the shore. I strained my eyes to catch a glance of some living object, but a dreary and motionless expanse stretched around me on every side, and the appalling silence that prevailed was sometimes interrupted by the receding cries of the wounded bird. All nature seemed to be awaiting some terrible event. I listened in fearful suspense, though I knew not what I expected to hear. I soon distinguished a distant thundering noise, which gradually became stronger, and appeared to approach the place where I stood. Repeated explosions, and hollow murmurings of irregular loudness, were succeeded by a tremendous sound, like that of rocks bursting asunder. The ice trembled beneath my feet, and the next moment it was disunited by a vast chasm, which opened itself within a few yards of me. The water of the lake rushed upwards through the gap with foaming fury, and began to flood the surface all around.

I started backwards, and ran, as I conceived, towards the shore; but my progress was soon stopped by one of those weak parts of the ice called *air-*

holes. While walking cautiously round it, my mind grew somewhat composed, and I resolved not to advance any farther, until I had fixed upon some way of regulating my course; but I found this to be impossible. I vainly endeavoured to discern land, and the moaning of the wind among the distant forests alone indicated that there was any at all near me. Strong and irregular blasts, loaded with snow and sleet, swept wildly along, involving every thing in obscurity, and bewildering my steps with malignant influence. I sometimes fancied I saw the spot where our post was situated, and even the trees and houses upon it; but the next moment a gust of wind would whirl away the fantastic shaped fogs that had produced the agreeable illusion, and reduce me to actionless despair. I fired my gun repeatedly, in the hope that the report would bring some one to my assistance; however, the shores alone acknowledged, by feeble echoes, that the sound had reached them.

The storm increased in violence, and at intervals the sound of the ice breaking up, rolled upon my ear like distant thunder, and seemed to mutter appalling threats. Alarm and fatigue made me dizzy, and I threw down my gun and rushed forwards in the face of the drifting showers, which were now so thick as to affect my respiration. I soon lost all sense of fear, and began to feel a sort of frantic delight in struggling against the careering blasts. I hurried on, sometimes running along the brink of a circular opening in the ice, and sometimes leaping across frightful chasms—all the while unconscious of having any object in view. The ice every where creaked under my feet, and I knew that death awaited me, whether I fled away or remained on the same spot. I felt as one would do, if forced by some persecuting fiend to range over the surface of a black and shoreless ocean; and aware, that whenever his tormentor withdrew his sustaining power, he would sink down and be suffocated among the billows that struggled beneath him.

At last night came on, and, exhausted by fatigue and mental excitement, I wrapped myself in my cloak, and lay down upon the ice. It was so dark that I could not have moved one step without running the risk of falling into the lake. I almost wished that the

drowsiness, produced by intense cold, would begin to affect me; but I did not feel in the slightest degree chilled, and the temperature of the air was in reality above freezing. I had lain only a few minutes when I heard the howl of a wolf. The sound was indescribably delightful to my ear, and I started up with the intention of hastening to the spot from whence it seemed to proceed; but hopeless as my situation then was, my heart shrunk within me when I contemplated the dangers I would encounter in making such an attempt. My courage failed, and I resumed my former position, and listened to the undulations of the water as they undermined, and beat against the lower part of the ice on which I lay.

About midnight the storm ceased, and most of the clouds gradually forsook the sky, while the rising moon dispelled the darkness that had previously prevailed. However, a thick haze covered the heavens, and rendered her light dim and ghostly, and similar to that shed during an eclipse. A succession of noises had continued with little interruption for several hours, and at last the ice beneath me began to move. I started up, and, on looking around, saw that the whole surface of the lake was in a state of agitation. My eyes became dim, and I stretched out my arms to catch hold of some object, and felt as if all created things were passing away. The hissing, grinding, and crashing, produced by the different masses of ice coming into collision, were tremendous. Large fragments sometimes got wedged together, and impeded the progress of those behind them, which being pushed forward by others still farther back, were forced upon the top of the first, and fantastic-shaped pyramids and towers could be indistinctly seen rising among the mists of night, and momentarily changing their forms, and finally disorganizing themselves with magical rapidity and fearful tumult. At other times, an immense mass of ice would start up into a perpendicular position, and continue gleaming in the moonshine for a little period, and then vanish like a spectre among the abyss of waters beneath it. The piece of ice on which I had first taken my position, happened to be very large and thick, but other fragments were soon forced above it, and

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formed a mound six or seven feet high, on the top of which I stood, contemplating the awful scene around me, and feeling as if I no longer had the least connection with the world, or retained any thing human or earthly in my composition.

The wind, which was pretty strong, drove the ice down the lake very fast. My alarms and anxieties had gradually become less intense, and I was several times overcome by a sort of stupor; during the continuance of which, imagination and reality combined their distracting influence. At one time I fancied that the snow still drifted as violently as ever, and that I distinguished, through its hazy medium, a band of Indian chiefs walking past me upon the surface of the lake. Their steps were noiseless, and they went along with wan and dejected looks and downcast eyes, and paid no attention to my exclamations and entreaties for relief. At another, I thought I was floating in the middle of the ocean, and that a blazing sun flamed in the cloudless sky, and made the ice which supported me melt so fast, that I heard streams of water pouring from its sides, and felt myself every moment descending towards the surface of the billows. I was usually awakened from such dreams by some noise or violent concussion, but always relapsed into them whenever the cause of disturbance ceased to operate.

The longest and last of these slumbers was broken by a terrible shock, which my ice island received, and which threw me from my seat, and nearly precipitated me into the lake. On regaining my former position, and looking round, I perceived to my joy and astonishment, that I was in a river. The water between me and the shore was still frozen over, and was about thirty yards wide, consequently the fragment of ice on which I stood could not approach any nearer than this. After a moment of irresolution, I leaped upon the frozen surface, and began to run towards the bank of the river. My feet seemed scarcely to touch the ice, so great was my terror lest it should give way beneath me; but I reached the shore in safety, and dropped down completely exhausted by fatigue and agitation.

It was now broad day-light, but I neither saw animals nor human beings,
VOL. X.

nor any vestiges of them. Thick forests covered the banks of the river, and extended back as far as my eye could reach. I feared to penetrate them, lest I should get bewildered in their recesses, and accordingly walked along the edge of the stream. It was not long before I discovered a column of smoke rising among the trees. I immediately directed my steps towards the spot, and, on reaching it, found a party seated round a fire.

They received me with an air of indifference and unconcern, not very agreeable or encouraging to one in my destitute condition. However, I placed myself in their circle, and tried to discover to what tribe they belonged, by addressing them in the different Indian languages with which I was acquainted. I soon made myself intelligible, and related the circumstances that had brought me so unexpectedly among them. At the conclusion of my narrative, the men pulled their tomahawk pipes from their mouths, and looked at each other with incredulous smiles. I did not make any attempt to convince them of the truth of what I said, knowing it would be vain to do so, but asked for something to eat. After some deliberation, they gave me a small quantity of pemican, but with an unwillingness that did not evince such a spirit of hospitality as I had usually met with among Indians.

The party consisted of three men, two women, and a couple of children, all of whom sat or lay near the fire in absolute idleness; and their minds seemed to be as unoccupied as their bodies, for nothing resembling conversation ever passed between them. The weather was dreary and comfortless. A thick small rain, such as usually falls in North America during a thaw, filled the air, and the wigwam under which we sat afforded but an imperfect shelter from it. I passed the time in the most gloomy and desponding reflections. I saw no means by which I could return to the trading post, and the behaviour of the Indians made me doubt if they would be inclined to grant me that support and protection without which I could not long exist. One man gazed upon me so constantly and steadily, that his scrutiny annoyed me, and attracted my particular attention. He appeared to be the

youngest of the party, and was very reserved and unprepossessing in his aspect, and seemed to know me, but I could not recollect of ever having seen him before.

In the afternoon the rain ceased, and the Indians began to prepare for travelling. When they had accoutred themselves, they all rose from the ground without speaking a word, and walked away, one man taking the lead. I perceived that they did not intend that I should be of the party, but I followed them immediately, and, addressing myself to the person who preceded the others, told him, that I must accompany them, as I neither could live in the woods alone, nor knew in what part of the country I was. He stopped and surveyed me from head to foot, saying, "Where is your gun? Where is your knife? Where is your tomahawk?" I replied, that I had lost them among the ice. "My friend," returned he, "don't make the Great Spirit angry, by saying what is not. That man knows who you are," pointing to the Indian who had observed me so closely. "We all know who you are. You have come to trade with us, and I suppose your companions have concealed themselves at a distance, lest the appearance of a number of white men should intimidate us. They are right. Experience has taught us to fear white men; but their art, not their strength, makes us tremble. Go away, we do not wish to have any transactions with you. We are not to be betrayed or overpowered by liquid fire,* or any thing else you can offer us. None of us shall harm you. I have spoken the truth, for I have not two mouths."

When he had finished this oration, he remained silent, and I felt at a loss what to reply. At last I repeated my story, and endeavoured to convince him that I neither had any companions, nor was at all in a situation to trade with his people, or do them the slightest injury. He listened calmly to my arguments, and seemed to think there was some weight in them; and the young man already mentioned stepped forward, and said, "Let the stranger go with us,—the bones of my father cry out against our leaving him behind. I am young, but I dare to

advise.—Listen for once to the counsels of *Thakakawerenté*." The first speaker then waved his hand, as a signal that I should follow them, and the whole party proceeded in the same order as before.

Our leader pushed forward, apparently without the least hesitation, though, accustomed as I was to the woods, I could not discover the slightest trace of a footpath. He sometimes slackened his pace for a few moments, and looked thoughtfully at the trees, and then advanced as fast as before. None of the party spoke a word; and the rustling of the dry leaves under their feet was the only sound that disturbed the silence of the forest. Though freed from the fear of perishing for want, I could not reflect upon my situation without uneasiness and alarm; and my chance of being able to return to the post seemed to diminish every step I took. I felt excessively fatigued, not having enjoyed any natural or composed sleep the preceding night, and the roughness of the ground over which we passed, added to my weariness in an intolerable degree; but I could not venture to rest by the way, lest I should lose sight of the Indians for ever.

Soon after sunset, we stopped for the night, and the men set about erecting a wigwam, while the women kindled a fire. One of our party had killed a small deer, in the course of our journey, and he immediately proceeded to skin the animal, that a portion of it might be dressed for supper. When the venison was ready, they all sat down and partook of it, and a liberal allowance was handed to me; but the same silence prevailed that had hitherto been observed among them, and the comforts of a plentiful repast after a long journey, did not appear in the least degree to promote social communication. The meal being finished, the men filled their pipes with odoriferous herbs, and began to smoke in the most sedate manner, and the women prepared beds by spreading skins upon the ground. The composed demeanour of the party harmonized well with the silence and gloominess of the night; and it seemed that the awful solitude of the forests in which they lived, and the sublime and enduring

* Spirituous liquors.

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forms under which nature continually presented herself to their eyes, had impressed them with a sense of their own insignificance, and of the transitoriness of their daily occupations and enjoyments, and rendered them thoughtful, taciturn, and unsusceptible. I seated myself at the root of a large tree near the wigwam, and continued observing its inmates, till, overcome by fatigue, I sunk into a deep sleep.

About midnight I was awakened by some one pulling my hand, and, on looking up, I perceived the Indian who had opposed my accompanying them, and whose name was Outalisso, standing beside me. He put his finger on his lips, by way of enjoining silence, and motioned that I should rise and follow him. I obeyed, and he led me behind a large tree which grew at a little distance from the wigwam, and said, in a low voice, "Listen to me, my friend.—I told you that you would receive no harm from us; and shall I belie my words? Thakakawerenté, who requested that you might be allowed to follow our steps, says that his father was murdered by a party of people under your command, about nine moons ago. This may be true, and you at the same time may be guileless; for we cannot always controul those who are placed under our authority. He tells me that the spirit of the old man has twice appeared to him in his dreams to-night, desiring him to put you to death. He has gone to repose himself again, and if his father visits him a third time during sleep, he will certainly kill you whenever he awakes. You must, therefore, hasten away, if you wish to live any longer." "What can I do?" cried I; "death awaits me whether I remain here, or fly from Thakakawerenté. It is impossible for me to reach home alone." "Be patient," returned Outalisso, "and I will try to save you. Not far from hence, the roots of a large oak, which has been blown down by the wind, stretch high into the air, and may be seen at a great distance. You must go there, and wait till I come to you. Keep the mossy side of the trees on your left hand, and you will find the place without any difficulty."

Outalisso motioned me to hurry away, and I departed with a palpitating heart, and plunged into the recesses of the forest, and regulated my

course in the manner he directed. The moon was rising, and I could see to a considerable distance around. The rustling of the dry leaves among my feet often made me think that some one walked close behind me, and I scarcely dared to look back, lest I should see an uplifted tomahawk descending upon my head. I sometimes fancied I observed Thakakawerenté lurking among the brushwood, and stopped short till imagination conjured up his form in a different part of the forest, and rendered me irresolute which phantom I should endeavour to avoid.

I reached the tree sooner than I expected: It lay along the ground, and its immense roots projected from the trunk, at right angles, to the height of twelve or fourteen feet, their interstices being so filled with earth, that it was impossible to see through them.

I sat down, and found the agitation of my spirits gradually subside, under the tranquillizing influence of the scene. Not a breath of wind shook the trees, the leafless and delicately-fibred boughs of which, when viewed against the cloudless sky, seemed like a sable network spread overhead. The nests which the birds had made the preceding summer, still remained among the branches, silent, deserted, and unsheltered, making the loneliness of the forest, as it were, visible to the mind; while a withered leaf sometimes dropped slowly down—a sad memorial of the departed glories of the vegetable world. A small rivulet ran within a little distance of me, but its course was so concealed by long grass, that I would have been aware of its existence by the murmuring of its waters only, had it not glittered dazzlingly in the moonshine at one spot, while flowing over a large smooth stone. When I looked into the recesses of the forest, I saw the trees ranged before each other like colossal pillars, and gradually blending their stems together, until they formed a dark and undefined mass. In some places, a scathed trunk, whitened with the moss of successive centuries, stood erect in spectral grandeur, like a being whom immense age and associations, rivetted to long-past times, had isolated from the sympathies of his fellow-mortals. As the moon gradually rose on the arch of heaven, her light fell at different angles, and the aspect of the woods was continually changing. New

and grander groups of trees came into view, and mighty oaks and chestnuts seemed to stalk forward, with majestic slowness, from the surrounding obscurity, and, after a time, to give place to a succession of others, by retiring amidst the darkness from which they had at first emerged. Tremours of awe began to pervade my frame, and I almost expected that the tones of some superhuman voice would break the appalling silence that prevailed in the wilderness around me.

My mind, by degrees, became so calm, that I dropped into a half slumber, during which I had a distinct perception where I was, but totally forgot the circumstances connected with my situation. A slight noise at length startled me, and I awaked full of terror, but could not conceive why I should feel such alarm, until recollection made the form of Thakakawerenté flash upon my mind. I saw a number of indistinct forms moving backwards and forwards, a little way from me, and heard something beating gently upon the ground. A small cloud floated before the moon, and I waited with breathless impatience till it passed away, and allowed her full radiance to reach the earth. I then discovered that five deer had come to drink at the rivulet, and that the noise of them striking their fore-feet against its banks had aroused me. They stood gazing at me with an aspect so meek and beautiful, that they almost seemed to incorporate with the moonlight, but, after a little time, started away, and disappeared among the mazes of the forest.

When I surveyed the heavens, I perceived by the alteration which had taken place in their appearance, that I had slept a considerable time. The moon had begun to descend towards the horizon; a new succession of stars glittered upon the sky; the respective positions of the different constellations were changed; and one of the planets which had been conspicuous from its dazzling lustre, a few hours before, had set, and was no longer distinguishable. It was overpowering to think that all these changes had been effected without noise, tumult, or confusion, and that worlds performed their revolutions, and travelled through the boundlessness of space, with a silence too profound to awaken an echo in the noiseless depths of the forest, or dis-

turb the slumbers of a feeble human being.

I waited impatiently for the appearance of Outalisso, who had not informed me at what hour I might expect to see him. The stars now twinkled feebly amidst the faint glow of dawn that began to light the eastern horizon, and the setting moon appeared behind some pines, and threw a rich yellow radiance upon their dark-green boughs. Gentle rustlings among the trees, and low chirpings, announced that the birds began to feel the influence of approaching day; and I sometimes observed a solitary wolf stealing cautiously along in the distance. While engaged in contemplating the scene, I suddenly thought I saw an Indian a little way off. I could not ascertain whether or not it was Outalisso, but fearing it might be Thakakawerenté, whom I dreaded to encounter in my unarmed state, I retired from the roots of the tree, and concealed myself among some brushwood.

I remained there for some time, but did not perceive any one near me, and thinking that I had been deceived by fancy, I resolved to return to my former station, and accordingly set out towards the great tree, but shortly became alarmed at neither reaching it nor seeing it so soon as I expected. I turned back in much agitation, and endeavoured to retrace my steps to the brushwood, but all in vain. I examined the most remarkable trees around me, without being able to recollect of having seen one of them before. I perceived that I had lost myself. The moment I became aware of this, my faculties and perceptions seemed to desert me one after another, and at last I was conscious of being in existence only by the feeling of chaotic and insupportable hopelessness which remained; but after a little time, all my intellectual powers returned with increased vigour and acuteness, and appeared to vie with each other in giving me a vivid sense of the horrors of my situation. My soul seemed incapable of affording play to the tumultuous crowd of feelings that struggled to manifest themselves. I hurried wildly from one place to another, calling on Outalisso and Thakakawerenté by turns. The horrible silence that prevailed was more distracting than a thousand deafening noises

would have been. I staggered about in a state of dizzy perturbation. My ears began to ring with unearthly sounds, and every object became distorted and terrific. The trees seemed to start from their places, and rush past each other, intermingling their branches with furious violence and horrible crashings, while the moon careered along the sky, and the stars hurried backwards and forwards with eddying and impetuous motions.

I tried in vain for a long time to compose myself, and to bring my feelings under due subordination. The remembrance of the past was obliterated and renewed by fits and starts; but at best, my recollection of any thing that had occurred to me previous to the breaking up of the ice upon the lake, was shadowy, dim, and unsatisfactory, and I felt as if the former part of my life had been spent in another world. I lay down among the withered leaves, and covered my face with my hands, that I might avoid the mental distraction occasioned by the sight of external objects. I began to reflect that I could not possibly have as yet wandered far from the great tree, and that if I called upon Outalisso at intervals, he might perhaps hear me and come to my relief. Consoled by the idea, I gradually became quiet and resigned.

I soon began to make the woods resound with the name of Outalisso; but, in the course of the day, a tempest of wind arose, and raged with so much noise that I could hardly hear my own voice. A dense mist filled the air, and involved every thing in such obscurity that the sphere of my vision did not extend beyond five or six yards. The fog was in continual agitation, rolling along in volumes, ascending and descending, burating open and closing again, and assuming strange and transitory forms. Every time the blast received an accession of force, I heard a confused roaring and crashing at a distance, which gradually increased in strength and distinctness, till it reached that part of the forest that stretched around me. Then the trees began to creak and groan incessantly, their boughs were shattered against each other, fibres of wood whirled through the air in every direction, and showers of withered leaves caught up, and swept along by the wind, met and mingled with them, and rendered the

confusion still more distracting. I stood still in one spot, looking fearfully from side to side, in the prospect of being crushed to death by some immense mass of falling timber, for the trees around me, when viewed through the distorting medium of the fog, often appeared to have lost their perpendicularity, and to be bending towards the earth, although they only waved in the wind. At last I crept under the trunk of an oak that lay along the ground, resolving to remain there until the tempest should abate.

A short time before sunset the wind had ceased, the mists were dissipated, and a portion of the blue sky appeared directly above me. Encouraged by these favourable appearances, I ventured from my place of refuge, and began to think of making another attempt to regain the great tree, when I heard the report of a rifle. I was so petrified with joy and surprise that I had no power to call out till the firing was repeated. I then shouted "Outalisso" several times, and soon saw him advancing towards me.

"Why are you not at the place I appointed," cried he; "I feared you had lost yourself, and discharged my gun as a signal,—but all danger is past—Thakakawerenté is dead, I killed him." There was some blood on Outalisso's dress, but he looked so calm and careless that I hesitated to believe what he told me.

"I do not deceive you," said he, "and I will tell you how Thakakawerenté came by his death. He awoke soon after midnight, and not finding you in the camp, suspected that I had told you that he intended to kill you. He taxed me with having done so, and I scorned to deny it. His anger made him forget the truth, and he said I had betrayed my trust, and at the same time struck me on the face. Now you know an Indian never forgives a blow, or an accusation such as he uttered. I buried my tomahawk in his head. His friends lay asleep in the wigwam, and I dragged away his body to some distance, and covered it with leaves, and then concealed myself till I saw them set out on their journey, which they soon did, doubtless supposing that Thakakawerenté and I had gone on before. I have been at the great tree since morning, but the mist and the tempest prevented me from seeking

you till now. Be satisfied, you shall see the corpse of Thakakawerenté.— Follow me!"

Outalisso now began to proceed rapidly though the forest, and I walked behind him without uttering a word. We soon reached the spot where the Indians had slept the preceding night, and found the wigwam remaining, and likewise several embers of fire. My companion immediately fanned them into a state of brightness, and then collected some pieces of dry wood that lay around, and piled them upon the charcoal. The whole soon burst into a blaze, and we both sat down within its influence, Outalisso at the same time presenting me with a quantity of pemican, which proved very acceptable, as I had eat nothing for more than twenty hours.

After we had reposed ourselves a little, Outalisso rose up, and motioned that I should accompany him. He conducted me to a small pile of brushwood and dry leaves, part of which he immediately removed, and I saw the corpse of Thakakawerenté stretched beneath. I shrunk back, shuddering with horror, but he pulled me forwards, and said, I must assist him in conveying the body to the fire. Seeing me still unwilling, he took it up in his arms, and hurrying away, deposited it in the wigwam. I followed him; and asked what he meant by doing so. "Are you ignorant of our customs?" said he: "When an Indian dies, all his property must be buried with him. He who takes any thing that belonged to a dead person, will receive a curse from the Great Spirit in addition. After I had killed Thakakawerenté, I took up his tomahawk by mistake, and carried it away with me. I must now restore it, and also cover him with earth lest his bones should whiten in the sun."

Outalisso now proceeded to arrange the dress of the dead man, and likewise stuck the tomahawk in his girdle. He next went a little way into the forest

for the purpose of collecting some bark to put in the bottom of the grave, and I was left alone.

The night was dark, dim, and dreary, and the fire blazed feebly and irregularly. A superstitious awe stole over me, and I dared hardly look around, though I sometimes cast an almost involuntary glance at the corpse, which had a wild and fearful appearance. Thakakawerenté lay upon his back, and his long, lank, black hair was spread confusedly upon his breast and neck. His half-open eyes still retained a glassy lustre, and his teeth were firmly set against each other. Large dashes of blood stained his vest, and his clenched hands, and contracted limbs, shewed what struggles had preceded death. When the flickering light of the fire happened to fall upon him, I almost fancied that he began to move, and would have started away, had not a depressing dread chained me to the spot; but the sound of Outalisso's axe, in some degree, dissipated the fears that chilled my heart, and I spent the time in listening to the regular recurrence of its strokes, until he came back with an armful of bark.

I assisted him in burying Thakakawerenté under the shade of a tall walnut tree; and when we had accomplished this, we returned to the fire, and waited till moonlight would enable us to pursue our journey. Outalisso had willingly agreed to conduct me home, for he wished to change his abode for a season, lest Thakakawerenté's relations should discover his guilt, and execute vengeance upon him.

We set out about an hour after midnight, and travelled through the woods till dawn, when we came in sight of the river, on the banks of which I had first fallen in with the Indians. In the course of the day, Outalisso procured a canoe, and we paddled up the stream, and next morning reached the trading post on the side of the lake.

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